



CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Clean Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please let us know. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Municipal Wastewater System Improvement
APPLICANT: Chambers, Nebraska
COUNTY: Holt County
POPULATION: 268
CWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: C318029
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$490,500
ESTIMATED CWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$245,250

Chambers, Nebraska is in Holt County. The 2010 census population of Chambers is 268. The Village of Chambers currently has 3-cell lagoon system. These lagoons were rehabilitated in 2011 and 2012, including the reshaping of the lagoon berms, installation of riprap, new pipework between cells, disposal of sludge from their northeast lagoon cell, and the installation of a land application system. The Village has three lift stations. Two of them are in town and the third lift station is at the lagoons. The collection system is mostly 8" clay tile sewer main. There are some areas of 8" PVC sewer main along with some 6" sewer piping. In 2011 and 2012, the Village had 9 blocks of sewer main repaired with cured-in-place-pipe (CIPP).

The Village of Chambers has a long history of high groundwater levels. The groundwater levels fluctuate with weather patterns and are generally higher than the sanitary sewer collection system during wet periods and lower during the dry periods. Starting in 2018, the wastewater flow rates increased, and the lagoons required frequent discharge. So to gain a better understanding of possible causes for high amount of wastewater, some various manholes were inspected to see if groundwater was entering the system through the joints. The manholes in Chambers are made of pre-cast concrete sections and are in good condition. The inspection also showed the grout installed in 2011 and 2012 was still in good condition. No areas of groundwater flowing into the manhole were observed. The Village also has some basement sump pumps believed to be pumping into the wastewater system. Upon a field inspection that commenced at the end of March 2019, it does not appear that sump pumps have a significant impact on the wastewater system. Therefore, it is concluded that the collection system likely has small leaks throughout the system that contributes to the increase in wastewater flow to the lagoons.

To address abovementioned inflow and infiltration problem, the Village decided to purchase more land application site and improve their efficiency in land applying their treated wastewater. The Village currently has an agreement with landowner northwest of the village lagoons. The Village plans to purchase the 135 acres of farmlands which contains the center pivot to provide more operational flexibility and to maximize the land application efficiency. The Village is planning to land apply the treated wastewater from April 1st to November 30th, by adopting the application rate of 1 inch per acre per week. This application strategy enables the community to irrigate 124 million gallons of

wastewater, which is more than two times amount of total wastewater flow (57 million gallons) in year of 2019. The Village also plans to be active in monitoring their wastewater flows. This includes maintaining good records and taking reasonable steps to reduce wastewater flows.

The project is listed on the planning list of the FY2020 Intended Use Plan and is eligible for CWSRF financing. Chambers' median household income is \$41,176. The total project cost is estimated about \$490,500. The total number of users is 158. Therefore, Chambers qualifies for small town grant (STG) up to 50% of total project cost. The amount of STG is \$245,250. Chambers also qualifies for the green project reserve criteria that could receive up to a 0.25% reduction in annual interest. Chambers is eligible for a 17-year CWSRF loan at the current program interest rate of 1.25 percent. In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 0.5 percent of the outstanding principal balance would be assessed each year. Sewer use fees will be dedicated to service the proposed CWSRF loan, and the operation and maintenance of the sewer utility. It is estimated that \$10.02 per user per month will be added to the current user rate due to this new SRF loan.

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as floodplains, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy.

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local or tribal laws are being violated.

This action is taken based on careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEE. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Jian Li, P.E, Environmental Engineer, of the Technical Assistance Section of NDEE, who can be reached at (402) 471-3556 or email: jian.li@nebraska.gov

Signed this 29th day of May, 2020.

Sincerely,

Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Distribution List & Maps

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

DISTRIBUTION LIST

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Location of Village of Chambers